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ABSTRACT

This planning overview is part of phase two of PROJECT DESIGN, an ESEA Title III project administered by the Fresno City Unified School District. Developing a long-range interagency master plan for Fresno involves three separate but interrelated activities. The first branch of activity consists of conducting a needs assessment (EA 002 822 thru EA 002 845). In the second branch, results of the needs assessment are used to identify priority problems and to define procedures for solving them when immediate and intermediate action is necessary. This involves defining and analyzing priority needs, generating alternative solution strategies, selecting the optimum strategy, drawing a detailed master plan for implementing that strategy, and evaluating. At each step in the problem-solving process there is communication with the Community Planning Register (EA 002 851 and 852). This interchange allows for the third branch, which is the linking of immediate problem solving with that of a long-range educational and community master plan. (Author/DE)

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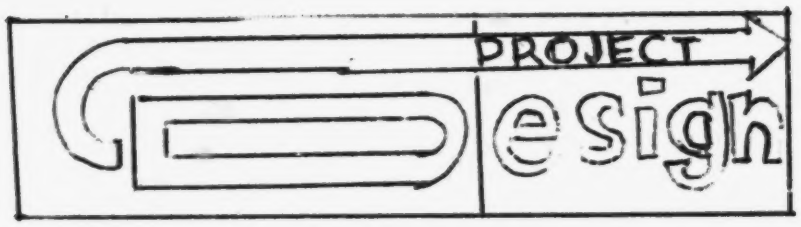

THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

BY

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INTER-AGENCY PLANNING FOR URBAN EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
August 16, 1968

THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

> "Planning philosophy presupposes that man must influence his future to some degree by present actions to survive. It considers this effort ethically desirable. It implies that human knowledge and rationality are cumulative, and presumes the existence of goals sufficiently definite for planning. Reciprocally, scientific investigation of theory and practice shapes planning philosophy by contributing new and more reliable knowledge to substantiate or modify intuitive beliefs and subjective reasoning."
>
> --M. C. Branch*

A long-range comprehensive master plan for educational development in a community has at least four important dimensions. Applied to Fresno, these are:

Vertical. The master plan should be based on the conditions that currently exist and on those that can be realistically forecast for the future. It should be also consistent with Federal and State legal enactments and be in harmony with the regional developments within the San Joaquin Valley and Central California.

Horizontal. The master plan should provide for a maximum involvement of community leaders and organizations and should be based upon the finest available professional skill and scientific knowledge and information. In this way it furnishes a long-range type of dynamic program of improvement which resolves educational problems of a

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* Melville C. Branch, Planning Aspects and Application, p. 309.

community-wide nature with a cooperative type of collective wisdom that reflects the best thoughts and aspirations of the total community.

In-Depth. The master plan should be of such nature that it can improve the sufficient allocation of community resources in deliberate attempts to enhance the development of human and material resources. In addition, it should be developed in a way that improves the professional capabilities of employees and causes a minimum of interruption in the regular activities of the schools and community organizations.

Time. The master plan must provide concrete answers and give specific directions for the solutions of the most critical and immediate problems faced by the school-community. Moreover, it must provide an opportunity for the citizenry to influence in a positive way the future development of the school-community and thus control their own destiny. It should provide for a long term on-going effort that fixes the responsibility for a continuing, broad community involvement which attempts to harmonize the solution of immediate-and intermediate-range problems with those significant plans of a long-range character.

THE TWO-YEAR PROJECT FOR A MASTER PLAN DEVELOPMENT IN FRESNO

Developing a long-range inter-agency master plan for Fresno involves three separate but inter-related activities. These are shown in Figure 1. The first branch of activity consists of conducting a needs assessment.

Second, the results of this needs assessment are to be used in identifying priority problems and defining procedures for solving these when they call for immediate and intermediate action. The third branch of activities consists of defining the procedures of the master plan for solving long-range school-community problems. Figure 1 illustrates how these three branches of activities are interrelated and how they constitute the major thrusts provided by the Inter-Agency Planning Project.

CONDUCTING A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Master plan development begins with what is commonly referred to as a needs assessment. This is a procedure for the identification of priority problems. The needs assessment thus attempts to answer the following questions:

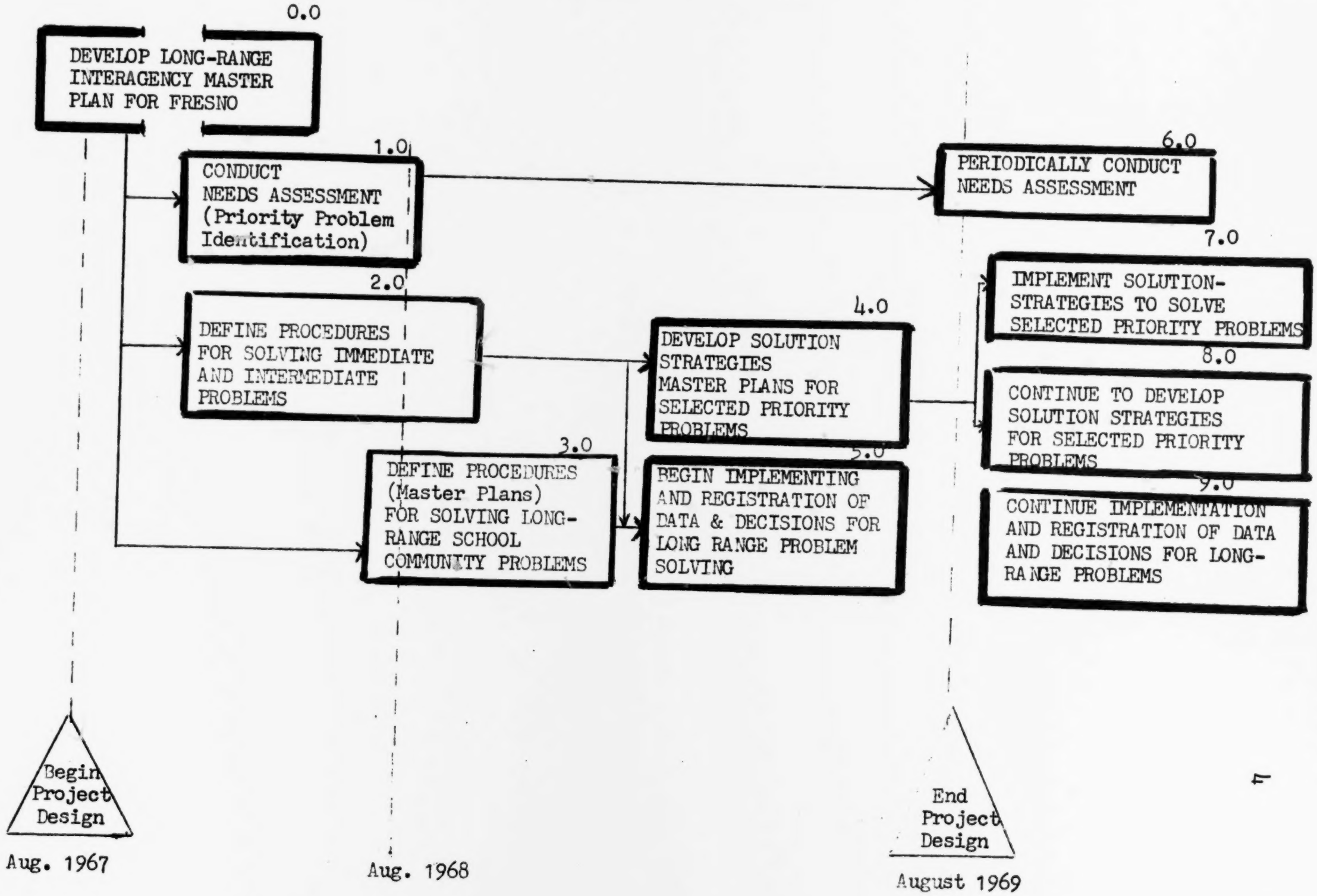
What are the real needs? (Not the symptoms nor the concerns expressed by the most vocal citizenry but actually the real needs of the community?)

How can a wide array of persons in the community be encouraged to express their concerns about educational needs?

Which of these identified concerns constitute the most important need? (We live in a community where resources are scarce and it may be impossible to solve all of the problems or at least to solve all of them at one time. Therefore, a priority among needs must be established).

Are the expressed concerns an accurate description of community conditions?

MAJOR ACTIVITY BRANCHES IN THE DEVELOPMENT
OF FRESNO'S INTERAGENCY MASTER PLAN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DEVELOP LONG-RANGE INTERAGENCY MASTER PLAN FOR FRESNO
1.0
CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT (Priority Problem Identification)
2.0
DEFINE PROCEDURES FOR SOLVING IMMEDIATE AND INTERMEDIATE PROBLEMS
3.0
DEFINE PROCEDURES (Master Plans) FOR SOLVING LONG-RANGE SCHOOL COMMUNITY PROBLEMS
4.0
DEVELOP SOLUTION STRATEGIES MASTER PLANS FOR SELECTED PRIORITY PROBLEMS
5.0
BEGIN IMPLEMENTING AND REGISTRATION OF DATA & DECISIONS FOR LONG RANGE PROBLEM SOLVING
6.0
PERIODICALLY CONDUCT NEEDS ASSESSMENT
7.0
IMPLEMENT SOLUTION-STRATEGIES TO SOLVE SELECTED PRIORITY PROBLEMS
8.0
CONTINUE TO DEVELOP SOLUTION STRATEGIES FOR SELECTED PRIORITY PROBLEMS
9.0
CONTINUE IMPLEMENTATION AND REGISTRATION OF DATA AND DECISIONS FOR LONG-RANGE PROBLEMS
Begin Project Design
Aug. 1967
Aug. 1968
End Project Design
August 1969

FIGURE 1

What is the feasibility to resolve the needs with available resources?

Figure 2 presents graphically the procedures used in the Fresno school-community in conducting a needs assessment during 1968. From the figure, it may be seen how the data generated from "Brainstorm", "Student Speak-Up", "Speak-Up", statistical analyses, and task force specialist studies have been integrated into an expression of needs for the identification of priority problems. From the figure it may also be seen that processing these data forms the basis for the priority problems selected for immediate attention.

PROCEDURE FOR SOLVING IMMEDIATE AND INTERMEDIATE PROBLEMS

After the priority problems have been identified, a systematic and logical procedure must be adopted that will provide successful solutions of the identified problems. This systematic procedure is shown in graphic form in Figure 3. From the figure it may be seen that for each problem, six steps constitute the elements of the scientific process of problem solving: (1) define the priority needs; (2) analyze the priority problems; (3) generate alternative solution strategies; (4) select the optimum solution strategy; (5) draw a detailed master plan for implementing the optimum solution strategy; and (6) evaluate (and revise as necessary).

It may also be noted from Figure 3 that with each step in the problem-solving process there is an interface or communication exchange with the Community Planning Register. This inter-communication gives assurance that all existing information has been referred to and that

PROCEDURES FOLLOWED IN
FRESNO'S
NEEDS ASSESSMENT OF 1968

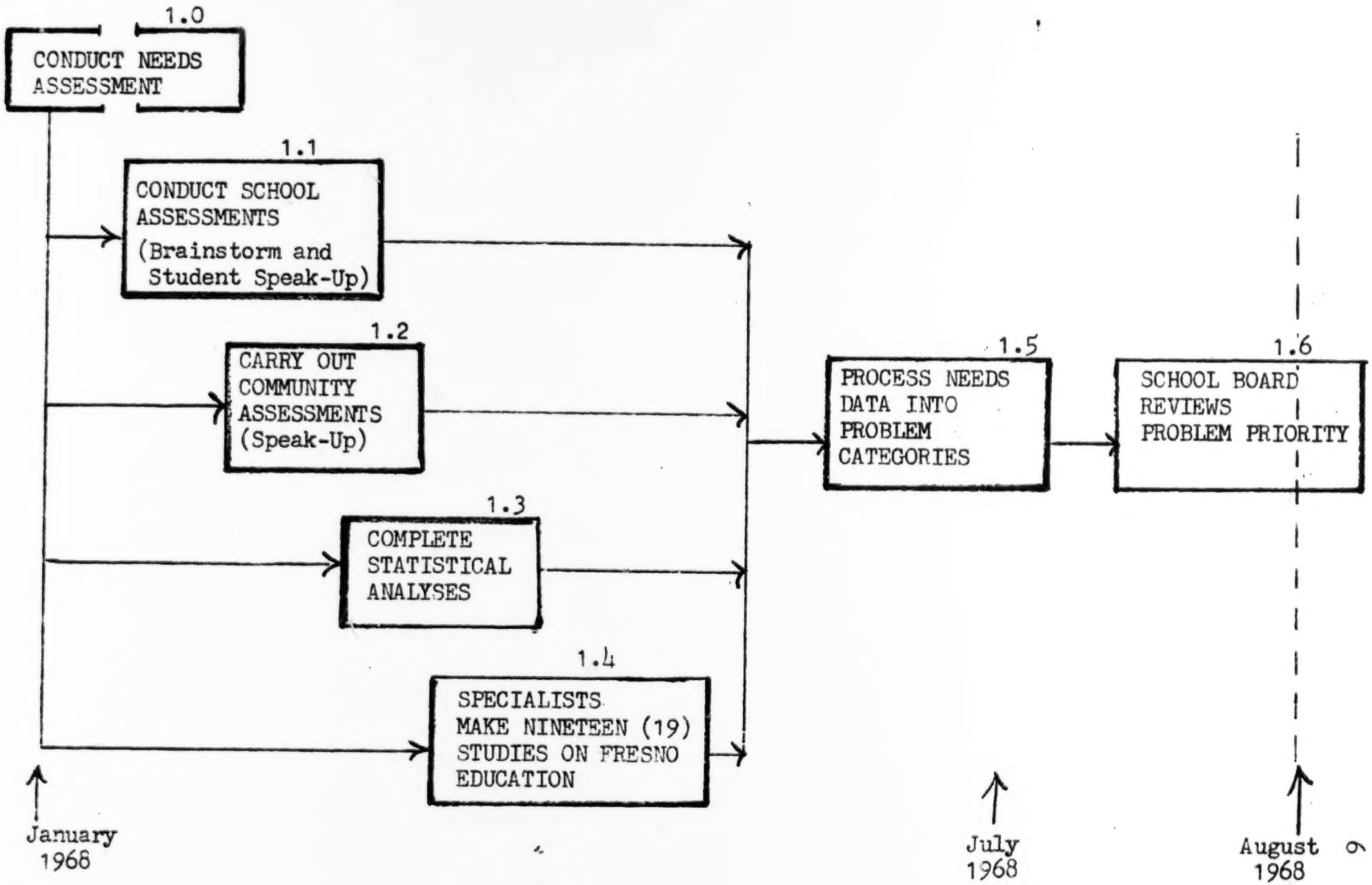

FIGURE 2

STEPS AND INTERCOMMUNICATION LINKS TO BE TAKEN
IN SOLVING IMMEDIATE PRIORITY PROBLEMS OF
EDUCATION IN FRESNO

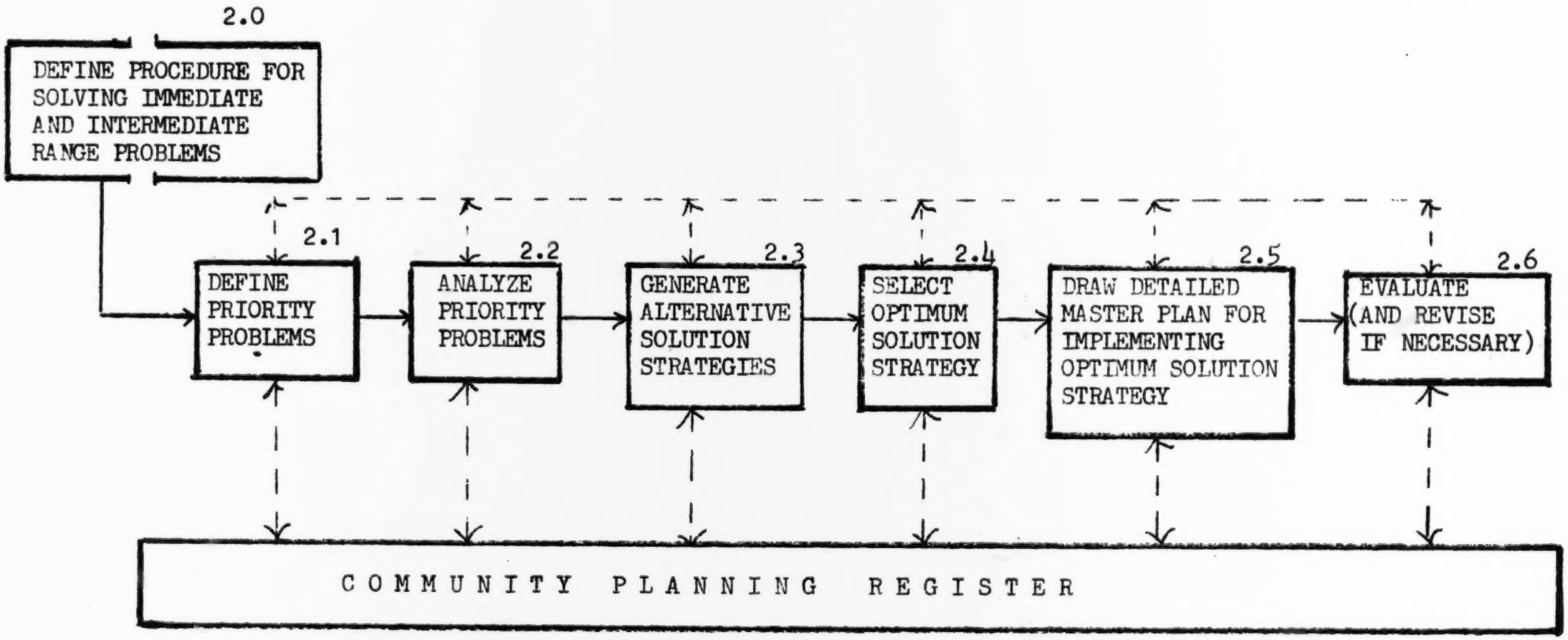

FIGURE 3

all current and projected developments have been reviewed for consistency, harmony, and congruence of objectives. This interchange allows the linking of immediate problem solving with that of a long-range educational and community master plan.

The continuing challenge exists to define carefully the many decisions that must be made by various boards, organizations and agencies that will have a significant impact in the long-range development of Fresno. Obviously the way people in Fresno will earn a living in the future will govern the kind of education that must be received in order for citizens to function effectively in living a full and abundant life. How the population will be deployed, (how the ethnic composition will be dispersed), how transportation arteries and housing will be located, are all important considerations. Each of these decisions and many more will be influential in the development of a long-range educational master plan.

Figure 4 outlines some of these suggested kinds of decisions that must be made in effecting school construction in a long-range master plan. It illustrates some of the significant events that must transpire for the master plan to become a functional reality and have a genuine impact on priority problem-solving activities.

SAMPLE SIGNIFICANT EVENTS IN LONG-TERM PLANNING

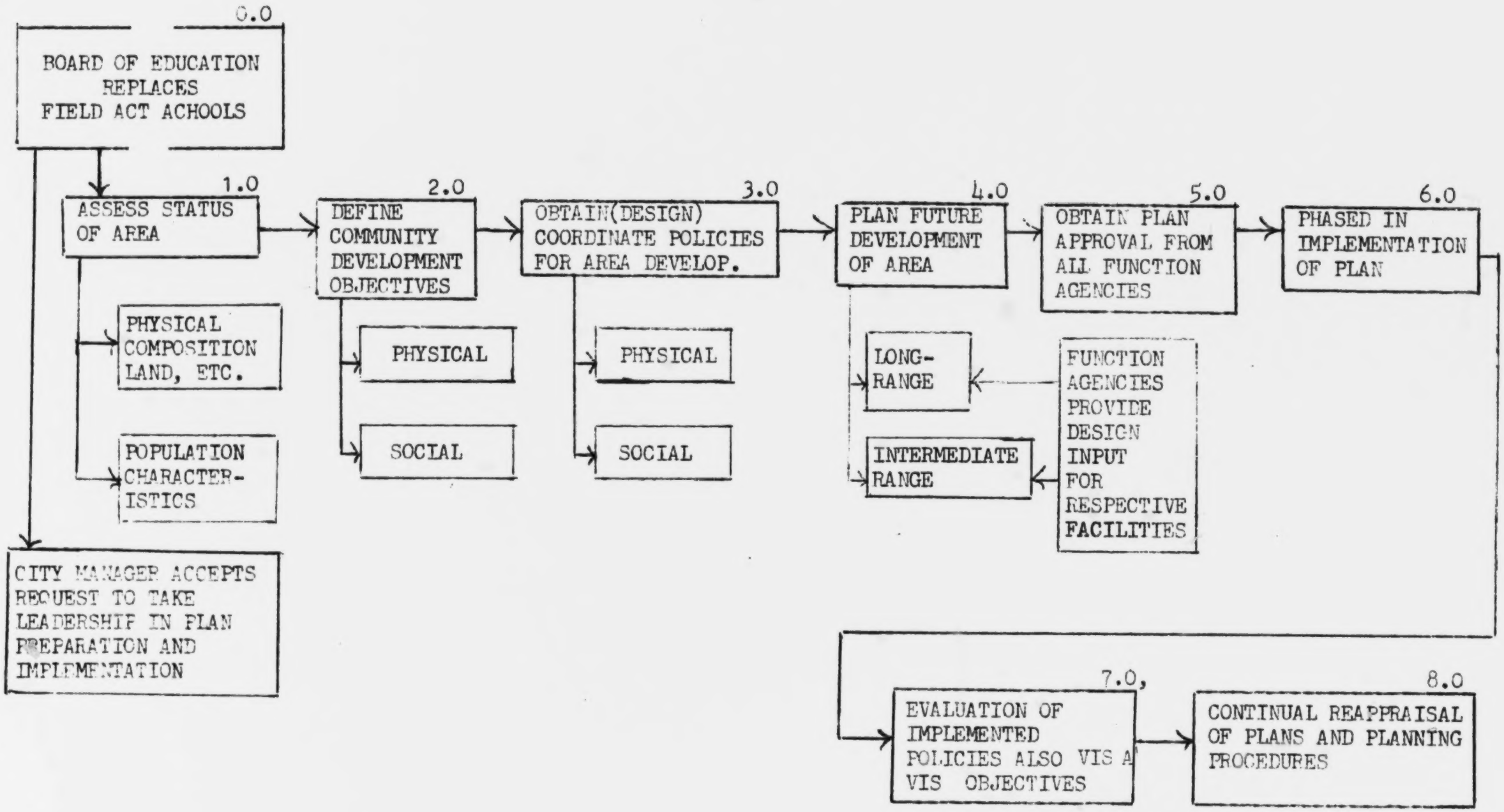

FIGURE 4